CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

1859-1883

BY

MASANOBU ISHIZAKA

Dissertation submitted to the Board of University Studies of the Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1895

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CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

INTRODUCTION.

Christianization of Japan does not simply mean a conversion of heathens, nor an uplifting of the ignorant to a higher enjoyment of civilized life as is often supposed by the American public; but it involves a far wider question. It is, in short, an attempt to reconstruct the Oriental idea upon the basis of the Occidental principle, or to implant the seeds of Christian truth into already cultivated and fertilized soil, or, in other words, it is another crusade of the western nations against the Asiatic nations in a different form and from different motives.

The struggle between the Orient and the Occident is nothing new. For centuries the East and West regarded each other as irreconcilable enemies, and the borders of Europe were a permanent battlefield between these two antagonistic forces. While they were thus struggling with each other there sprang up two distinct civilizations, each differing diametrically from the other. One, starting from the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, went westward through Europe and America and developed into the Christian religion. The other, rising at the foot of the Himalaya, moved eastward to the extremity of Asia and appeared in Buddhism and Confucianism. The one characterizes a free state; the other, an absolute monarchy. One is a positive principle; the other, a negative principle. These two diametrically opposed principles, the twins of the world's history, which fought for their supremacy for so many centuries without ever coming to peaceful terms, happen to meet again in Japan today after each has completed its civilization in its own direction. What will be the outcome of this second meeting? Will it be the renewal of the old endless struggle? Can the East and the West never be

brought together under one common feeling of brotherhood? If this world was made by more than one creator, if Christ's gospel is intended for only one race of people, if the sensibilities of the Orientals and the Occidentals are so constructed that they cannot share the same feeling in religion as well as in other matters, then this pessimistic view might be true. But as we believe in one God and one truth for all people, and as there is strong evidence gathered from different missionary fields that all men are capable of enjoying the same feeling in matters of religion, we have good reason to believe that this second meeting is the beginning of the breaking up of the barriers which have so sharply separated the East from the West,—the first step towards the reunion of the sons of Adam into one household before the family altar of Jehovah after many centuries of separation.

This anticipaton does not seem to be utopian. Already it is confirmed by encouraging signs. The world has undergone a great change since the two rival powers so mercilessly contested on the boundaries of Europe. Bitter feelings of enmity are fast fading away and a general friendly intercourse is more and more prevailing all over the world. Merchants of London and New York can invest their money in the markets of Yokohama and Shanghai today without exposing it to much danger while the educational institutions of Europe and America have among their alumni students of the far East. Such prevalence of general friendly feeling never existed before in the history of the world.

At this favorable time, these two opposing principles meet in that enterprising country, Japan, where every condition for such an undertaking is most favorable—the country, whose gate is wide open to any form of faith; the country, where each one can speak for his own religion and criticize that of another with perfect freedom and where the leading men are very little prejudiced from narrow dogmatisms and intolerable theology.

The great obstacles to the formation of the universal

kingdom of Jehovah on earth have been thus far the absence of an impartial nation, which would serve as an arbitrator, and the lack of mutual knowledge, together with narrowness of mind, and prejudice. The Western people regarded everything outside themselves as "barbarism"; and those of the East, in turn, boasted of their own civilization as the only genuine one, each knowing in truth very little of the other. This fact was well illustrated by an incident in the Religious Congress in Chicago, when that great Hindoo Buddhist, Dharmapala, asked the audience how many of them had ever read the life of Buddha. To this question only five or six hands were timidly raised in response out of that large body of so-called scholars and doctors of religion. From this we can judge the ignorance in regard to other religions on the part of the common people, who, nevertheless, do not hesitate to denounce everything foreign. But, in Japan, the people are comparatively free from such an egotistic exclusiveness, and they have more impartial and rational views in matters of religion.

Taking now all these conditions into consideration Japan seems destined to be the special agent to accomplish something never favorably attempted before,—the breaking down of old prejudices and the fulfilling of the great plan of the Almighty to bring together the whole world into one common feeling of brotherhood and establish a pure and simple Christianity devoid of western superstitions and narrow dogmatisms. Japanese Christians themselves seem to be conscious of this great responsibility, for their whole attitude is turning more and more toward this direction. This is shown in their repeated attempts for church union, and the simplification of church creeds; in their aversion to the sectarian idea and narrow theology and in their careful separation of pure Christianity from Americanism and Europeanism.

But here the question may arise, are the native Christians able to solve such a great problem? To answer this question, the editor of the "Church at Home and Abroad,"

says "No other mission field in the world displays so much intellectual vigor, and offers so serious challenge to imposed dogma as Japan. At the latest anniversary of the Church Missionary Society, the Archbishop of Canterbury made the point in words as follows: 'Well, then, there is Japan. Here again, we see that we are on the eve of a discussion which may remind us forcibly of the theological discussion of the second, third, and fourth centuries. The Japanese are a philosophically minded people, an extremely independent people, an original people. They are not content to accept without question the results of disputes in the West, etc.'" [1] President Kozaki [2] also says on this point: "Christianity in Japan has already reached a stage that no other missionary fields have ever attained. Their native Christians not only take a part in all discussions, but they are in fact leading all kinds of discussions, theological as well as practical. They are leading not only in all kinds of Christian work, literary, evangelistic, educational, and charitable, but they are also leading Christian thought in Japan.

Such being the situation the growth and development of Japanese Christianity is of profound interest not only to the Japanese and their friends, but to all who are earnestly praying for and seeking after the coming and the establishment of the universal kingdom of God and His righteousness on earth.

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[1] The "Church at Home and Abroad," Sept., 1891.

[2] Kozaki's address in the Congress of Religions in Chicago.

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

CHAPTER I.

OPENING OF THE DOOR.

The news of the glorious success of Commodore Perry in his famous mission to Japan aroused great enthusiasm among Christians in America, and the question of sending out missionaries to this newly-opened country, for the salvation of which they had been praying for a long time, was earnestly discussed. But this enthusiasm was soon turned into disappointment temporarily when it was learned that Perry's treaty did not secure to the Americans the right of a permanent residence nor the exercise of religious freedom. As long as this right was not secured no Christian missionary could establish a station upon the land, for the Christian religion had not been tolerated in Japan for many centuries because of a peculiarly strong prejudice which had a long history behind it.

The story of the Catholic mission in Japan, how it was introduced and how it was expelled, is a familiar one. Suffice it to state here that the general hatred to the "evil sect" and its final expulsion originated in the fear, well grounded or not, that the Spanish government would, in combination with the Christians, form a conspiracy.

After this event, the strictest and most far-reaching system of inquisition was introduced by the government in order to extirpate every particle of this faith from the soil.[3] In the first place, every citizen was required to send

[3]For details, see Mr. Okada's scholarly articles in the Shiggakai Zasshi (Historical Magazine), April, 1891-Jan., 1892.

in to the government a certificate by which the Buddhist priest guaranteed "The said person was not a Christian, but belonged to his parish." This was a well-devised policy on the part of the government to make the inquisition thorough, for the Buddhist priests were the strongest rivals of the Christians, and consequently the most zealous crusaders, who showed no mercy to a suspected person. This law was applied to all persons alike, but there was another which was applied only to those who newly renounced the Christian faith. It was called "Efumi," or trampling upon the picture. By it, a person who had repented, was required to trample under foot the image of the Virgin Mary, or the picture of the crucifixion to show his sincerity in denouncing his old faith.

Two kinds of oaths were taken,—one to the Japanese deities, and the other to the Christian or "barbarian" God. The former was for the Buddhist believers, and the latter for the adjurers from the Christian faith to test whether they still had any reverence for their old God.

All books which had any reference either directly or indirectly to the Christian religion or any literature which contained even a single word relating to God, Christ, etc., were prohibited from circulation under strict censorial authority. These and other prohibitory laws were issued one after another and "a system of rules for the regulation of this inquiry was drawn up in which the minutest details regarding the search after Christians and missionaries, their arrest, imprisonment were carefully entered."[4] They were not dead letters, but were practically executed with zeal.

The next step the government took was the closing up of seaports. As long as the foreigners were permitted to reside among the people and intermingle with them, it was impossible to root out the Christian faith. Hence, all for-

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[4] Gubbin's Review of the introduction of Christianity into China and Japan, Transactions of Asiatic Society of Japan, Vol. VI., p. 35

eigners, Christians or not, were ordered to leave the country except a limited number of Dutch, who, for the services rendered to the government were permitted to remain on a small island off Nagasaki, called Dejima. The conditions on which this favor was granted were: "They shall not hold any communication with the 'kirishitan' sect, nor bring any missionaries into the country, but will communicate every year any information concerning the 'kirishitan' sect, which it may be desirable for his highness to hear."[5]

Thus Japan cut off the friendly relation with the Western peoples and became a thoroughly isolated nation. Now, it seems unnatural that such an adventurous and progressive people living so close to the continent should have remained isolated for so long a time. But this seeming unnaturalness shows the intense hatred of the people toward the Christian religion.

Such being the circumstances, had Commodore Perry ever attempted to obtain religious toleration, or even made the slightest allusion to it, he would not have succeeded in that memorable mission, or at least, he could not have opened the country without bloodshed. Sagacious as he was he well knew that this was the most delicate question with the Japanese government and so he carefully limited the sphere of his negotiation to the commercial matters, believing that "If," to use his own words, "one were prosecuted to a favorable result, the door would then be opened for success in the other." Perry's prediction was right. After his departure the appearance of many foreign fleets, the repeated warnings of the Dutch, the news of the Opium War in China, a better knowledge of the Western people, these and other forces combined, gradually convinced the government of the necessity of giving further concessions to the foreign powers. In 1858, Townsend Harris, the United States Counsel General, succeeded in making a new and more favorable treaty by which the Americans secured

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[5] Trans. of Asiatic Society, Vol. VI., p. 53.

the right of residence and liberty of worship within their own settlements. Thus, the prayers of earnest Christians in America were finally answered. Thus, the door was opened again for the gospel in the fulfillment of the promise "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Upon the receipt of these glad tidings the missionary societies of the United States entered into the actual work at once and sent out missionaries to the field. The first regularly appointed missionary who appeared on Japanese soil was Rev. J. Liggins, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America who came to Nagasaki on May 2, 1859.[6] He was soon followed by Rev. C. M. Williams of the same church. This was the first permanent Protestant mission established in this empire.[7] Before the close of the same year there were represented three churches of the United States, namely, the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and the Reformed, in the persons of Revs. J. Liggins, C. M. Williams, J. C. Hepburn, S. R. Brown, G. F. Verbeck, and Dr. D. B. Simmons. But the prospect was very discouraging. At the time of their arrival, the old ordinance against Christianity was still in full force and "missionaries soon found that they were regarded with great suspicion, and closely watched, and all intercourse with them was conducted with strict surveillance." When they wished to learn the native language "no teacher could be obtained at Kanagawa until March, 1860, and then only a spy in the employment of the gov-

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[6]Rev. J. Goble, of the Baptist Free Mission Society, who arrived as a missionary in 1860, had once before been in Japan in 1853-54, but at that time he did not come as a missionary, but as one of the marines belonging to the fleet of Commodore Perry. Hence, he cannot claim the honor of being the first arrived missionary.

[7] In the islands of Loo Choo some British naval officers established a Loo Choo Naval Mission some years before the arrival of Perry, and Dr. Bettelheim and Mr. Moreton preached to the natives for some time; but this was only temporary. It was entirely abandoned a few years later. See Hawks' Perry's Expedition, pp. 258, 572.

ernment." In short, the missionaries "were regarded as persons who had come to seduce the mass of the people from their loyalty to the 'God country,' and corrupt their morals generally."[8]

It was about this time that one of the foremost statesmen, Mr. Kido, defined a missionary as "a man who is sent to Japan to teach the Japanese to break the laws of their country."[9]

In such a state of affairs the propagation of the Gospel was, of course, hopeless. Mr. Williams' letter of June 18, 1861, illustrates the situation of the time, when he said "There is no proper missionary work to report. It may appear singular that so little has been accomplished, but the peculiar difficulties of our situation—the antecedents of Christianity in Japan, the jealousy of government, the sweeping clause in the treaty, that 'Americans shall not do anything calculated to excite religious animosity,' the ramifications of the system of espionage, reaching everywhere, alike the cottage of the poor, and the 'forbidden inclosure' [10] of the 'son of Heaven' [11] should all be kept in mind. When all these things are fully comprehended, it will be seen that great caution is necessary. A false step may be fatal, and surround us with such a host of spies, that intercourse with the people will be virtually cut off."

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[8] Proceedings of the Osaka Conference, pp. 30, 31.

[9] Adams' History of Japan, Vol. II., p. 146.

[10] The Imperial Palace was so called.

[11] The Mikado was considered the direct descendant of gods.

CHAPTER II.

BREAKING UP OF THE BARRIERS.

Obstacles so numerous and systematic to the advancement of Christianity seem at first sight to be almost unconquerable. Indeed, among some Christian communities in the United States the discouragement became so intense at one time that serious doubts were entertained as to the expediency of having sent out missionaries to a country but partially opened.[1] But a careful survey of the real nature of the obstacles will soon convince us that they were not so formidable as they seemed. The Japanese, as a nation, are comparatively free from religious fanaticism.[2] They did not hate Christianity because it was a religion. In other words, it was not religious fanaticism, but political expediency which made them regard Christianity as a national enemy.[3] This fact was clearly observed as early as 1854 by the chaplain of Perry's fleet, Rev. Mr. Jones, whose statement sounded prophetic. He said, in answer to the question as to the prospect of presenting Christianity to the Japanese "Apart from governmental influences I think there would be no great difficulty in introducing Christianity. * * * I performed funeral services on shore four times; once at Yokohama, twice at Hakodate, and once at Simoda; in every instance in the presence of Japanese, and in most, when

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[1] See Proc. of the Osaka Conference, p. 36.

[2] In an address, inviting the united prayers of the Christians at home, the pioneer missionaries of the Church Missionary Society said in 1866: "Contrary to the general expectation, it has been found that the Japanese generally do not entertain a feeling of hostility to foreigners, nor are they bigoted in religion. They even pride themselves upon being less stiff."

[3] See Adams' History of Japan, Vol. II., 146.

large numbers were collected. They always behaved well. I thus became known among the people everywhere as a Christian clergyman, or, to follow their sign for designating me, as a 'praying man.' Instead of this producing a shrinking from me, as I had supposed it would, I found that I had decidedly gained by it in this respect, and this among officials as well as commoners. * * * There was no seeming aversion to me because I was a minister of Christianity. The government, however, beyond all doubt, is exceedingly jealous about our religion; but the Japanese officials, as well as the people, are so inquisitive and so observant of all that comes within their reach, that doubtless, after a time, they might be brought to see the difference between ourselves and the Romanists."[4]

Thus we can see that the real nature of the obstacles was accidental rather than inherent; political rather than religious. Things political cannot, by their own nature, be so tenacious and permanent as things religious. They are subject to change according to the conditions of the times. Therefore, while the hope for the success of Christianity in Japan was buried in almost midnight darkness, the dawn of a better time was slowly and unobservedly approaching upon the missionaries from unexpected quarters, and the barriers against Christianity, strong as the walls of Jericho, quietly fell from within by the pressure of the necessities of the time.

The forces, which brought about this innovation in the public opinion, were many, but the following are the principal ones:

I. The bombardment of Kagoshima and Shimonoseki. On the refusal of indemnity for the wrong perpetrated by the retainers of the prince of Satsuma to a certain Englishman named Richardson, the British warships appeared off Kagoshima on the 12th of August, 1862, and bombarded the city. In spite of the heroic defence of the Samurai the city

[4] Hawks' Perry's Expedition, 516.

was reduced to ashes and the required indemnity [5] was extorted. Shimonoseki also met with the same treatment from the combined forces of the United States, England, France, and Holland. These events opened the eyes of the proud Samurai, who, heretofore, had thought the expulsion of the "barbarians" an easy task, convinced them of the superiority of the western weapons and art of war and converted them into earnest advocates of the western civilization.

II. The awakening of a nationalistic spirit. Just at this time great national enthusiasm was aroused among the people because of the presence of so many foreign enemies. As is generally the case at such a time everything foreign was regarded as something unpatriotic. This sentiment became so high that the statesmen of the time, most ridiculous to say, entertained the idea of creating a purely Japanese religion by the hand of the government. [6]Buddhism, being also of foreign origin and a close ally of the Shogunate was likewise despised by the patriots. Not only did it lose the patronage of the government after the restoration, but was finally dispossessed of that important function of giving a religious certificate to every citizen, which once rendered such efficient service in the detection of Christians.[7] Thus, the very weapons, which was intended to weaken the foreign influence, strange as it may seem, struck off one of the barriers to the spread of Christianity.

III. The thirst after the western knowledge. After the country was opened to foreigners a knowledge of western affairs became a necessity to the statesmen. This led some of the thoughtful men of the country, who, in later years came to occupy the prominent places in the government, to the study of the English language under the mis-

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[5] $500,000 from the Shogunate, and $125,000 from the Prince of Satsuma.

[6] See the "Kokumino Tomo" (The "Nation's Friend"), Nov. 3, 1893.

[7] Anecdote of Count Okuma, appeared in the "Hochi Shinbun," Sept., 1893.

sionaries, although they regarded them as national enemies.[8] But the frequency of intercourse gradually cleared away the mist of suspicion and finally convinced them of their erroneous conception regarding the real nature and purpose of the missionaries. When these liberal men began to direct the national affairs the missionaries were their confidential friends and some of them were given a place in the government school.[9]

IV. The relations with foreign powers. Friendly relations with Christian nations made it necessary for the government to respect, or at least to treat their religion in a more respectful way than before. The foreign representatives also exerted great efforts to secure the toleration of Christianity in Japan. When the restored Imperial government issued a new edict against Christianity, which said "The evil sect called Christian is strictly prohibited; suspected persons should be reported to the proper office and rewards will be given"[10] and when several hundred people in a village near Nagasaki, called Urakami, were arrested and imprisoned on the suspicion of embracing Christianity, the foreign representatives made a strong protest against this policy as opposed to the law of comity between nations and as con-

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[8] Protestanism was suspected by the people equally as much as Catholicism. As late as 1868 a pamphlet entitled "Tale of Nagasaki: The Story of the Evil Sect," was published, in which the writers say: "Compared with the Roman Catholic religion this (Protestant faith) is a very cunning doctrine indeed; although they try to make out that there is nothing abominable in it, they are really foxes of the same hole, and it is really more injurious than the Roman Catholic doctrine." Adams' History of Japan. Vol. II.

[9] Counts Okuma and Soyjima, the prominent statesmen of today, studied English under Messrs. Verbeck and Williams. Through Count Soyjima, Mr. Verbeck later found an appointment in Kaisei Gakko, which afterwards developed into the Imperial University of Japan.

[10] This edict was issued Oct. 25, 1868.

trary to the liberal promise made at the beginning of the new administration.[11]

"On the 18th of May," 1871, according to the Japan Weekly Mail, "the British Envoy, Sir Harry S. Parkes, had an audience to take leave. The Mikado, as was natural, made use of the ordinary expressions of regret in the public interview. Sir Harry Parkes, in reply, thanked his Majesty for his gracious words. * * * The speech ended with the usual expression of a hope that his Majesty might be spared many years to conclude the reforms he had so happily commenced. As a special mark of esteem the British Minister was also invited to a private audience in one of the pavilions in the park attached to the palace. Advantage was taken on both sides to speak with less formality than the etiquette of public audience requires. * * * He (Parkes) then recommended the Mikado to place full confidence in the foreigners in his employ, and he concluded by observing that there were still two spots on the Japanese escutcheon which would have to be removed before she could claim to rank with civilized countries, namely, the restriction of the movements of foreigners within what are called the treaty limits, and the prohibition against the exercise of the Christian religion by natives."[12]

Although these efforts of the foreign representatives did not have the desired result immediately, yet the government became exceedingly cautious in dealing with religious affairs in the future administration, and the law became practically a dead letter.

V. The return of ambassadors from abroad. A special embassy composed of distinguished persons of the time was sent out in 1871 to the United States, and the European nations with two objects in view, viz: the revision of the existing treaty, and the investigation of social and

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[11] See Anecdote of Count Okuma in the "Hochi Shinbun," Sept., 1893.

[12] See Adams' History of Japan, Vol. II., 247.

political institutions of other nations. Concerning the former, the embassy was a failure, but in the latter, its success cannot be overestimated. The ambassadors submitted to the government an elaborate report of their observations describing in the most favorable terms the social and political state of the western nations, and the influence of the Christian religion upon society.[13]

Such a glowing account of the western people could not but affect the subsequent administration of the government, and this, in turn, could not but react favorably upon the spread of Christianity. Indeed, while the embassy was still on its way, that obnoxious law against the "evil sect" was quietly removed from the public notice-board early in 1873, and from that time on, the exercise of Christian religion, though not publicly recognized by law till 1889, was no more molested by the state authority.

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[13] The Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church often gave assistance to many Japanese students in the United States. Messrs. Iwakura and Kido, during their ambassadorial tour, made an official acknowledgment to the Board of their kind assistance and generous conduct, which served to cement the friendly relations of the two countries more than all other influences combined. See Nitobe's United States and Japan, 166.

CHAPTER III.

INDIRECT OBSTACLES TO THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY.

Now the government opposition had at last been broken. Could then Christianity march on through the length and breadth of the whole country converting the people in its own way without meeting a further opposition? Far from it. The removal of governmental interference only brought Christianity for the first time face to face with its true antagonists to begin a series of life or death struggles. The first enemy which Christianity had to encounter was found in the mental characteristics of the Japanese. These people possess a strong taste for abstract reasoning, hence are directly opposed to the simple and practical teachings of Christianity. Close observers will easily find this peculiarity even among children. "I have often been utterly astounded," says Mr. Dening, "at the logic-chopping power of Japanese youth of twelve or thirteen years of age." There is no doubt that these peculiar characteristics are mainly due "to the nature of the education imparted. The books which infant students have been first taught to read—the Japanese 'Peep of Day' and 'Line Upon Line,' so to speak—have been the Confucian classics. Fancy one of our infants repeating after his teacher at his first lesson such sentences as the following: 'What the great learning teaches, is, to illustrate virtue, to renovate the people, and to rest in the highest excellence.' * * * 'The point where to rest being known, the object of pursuit is then determined,' etc."[1] It is not to be wondered at that to such minds the plain account of the Cross became a stumbling block.

To stimulate this speculative tendency many anti-Chris-

[1] See Mr. Dening's article on Mental Characteristics of Japanese, Trans. of the Asiatic Soc. of Japan, Vol. XIX., Part I., p. 18.

tian books of Europe and America, such as the works of Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Draper, Mill, Buckle, Alexander Bain, Thomas Paine, Robert Ingersoll, and others were freely introduced. Writings of this kind were exactly fitted to the taste of the naturally liberal minded Japanese. They were eagerly received and extensively read among the young students. When, therefore, the missionaries came into contact with the people more freely they were often placed in the most embarrassing situation by their inability to give satisfactory answers to the questions raised by the young students concerning the apparently contracted statements in the Scriptures as depicted by the sceptical writers.

Another difficulty of more complicated nature inhered in the ethical idea of the Japanese. According to their conception loyalty and filial piety are the cardinal virtues around which all other virtues are grouped as subordinates. Now, the seeming disregard of these duties in the Christian doctrine appeared to them detrimental to the preservation of moral order of society. Therefore, many people severely criticised the new faith on this point.[2]

The idea of death among the Japanese may be mentioned in this connection. There is a wide difference between the Japanese and the western people regarding the conceptions of death and future life. To the western people the question of future life is a very serious one and the most indifferent are often bought to penitential tears by the threatening of the final judgment. But such a question has very little effect over the Japanese. Their great ambition being to die bravely and honorably and leave behind them a "fragrant name," it concerns them very little what they shall be after death. At least they pretend to be too brave to think of anything else but a glorious death. Such an act, therefore, as seeking after salvation through prayer and supplica-

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[2] Many books were written by the Shintoists and Confucianists attacking Christianity on this point. Mr. Yasui's "Ben Mo" was the most popular one among the students.

tion as taught in the Christian religion is regarded as something unmanly, an act of cowardice and a lack of heroic spirit. This is no doubt the bequest of the feudalism which highly exalted the spirit of chivalry. Closely associated with this there are many noble traits which are woven into the fabric of society. The most striking one is the kind disposition of the Japanese toward their inferiors and the readiness to espouse the cause of the weak. In contrast with the western idea of applying business principles to every affair of daily life, generosity forms the basis of society in Japan. Disregard of this custom on the part of foreigners often creates great trouble. Either from the lack of knowledge, or simply from mere carelessness, or from their habit of using colored domestics at home, some missionaries tried to employ, in the treatment of the Japanese servants, coolies and day laborers, the same iron rule to which they had been accustomed. This was more than the lower classes of the Japanese people, who, used to an easy service, could ordinarily bear. The result was that not only all missionaries were criticized as inhuman, heartless, and cruel in direct opposition to the doctrine which they preach with their mouth, but their religion also was criticized as having no power even over its own ministers. How lamentable that such thoughtless acts of a few missionaries hindered so much the cause of the religion![3]

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[3] I purposely omitted the opposition of the Buddhist believers here, for the Buddhist religion was in a helpless condition about this time, being crippled externally by the withdrawal of governmental patronage and internally by the corruption of the priests and monks. Their systematic opposition to Christianity belongs to the next period.

CHAPTER IV.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK.

It must not, however, be supposed that no successful work has been done during all these times. Before the end of 1873, beside those missions already in the field, the Baptist Free Mission Society,[1] the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Baptist Missionary Union, the Church Missionary Society of England, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Canadian Methodist Church entered into the country one after another and missionary stations were established in Nagasaki, Kanagawa, Tokio, Kobe, Osaka, and Hakodate.

In these places, dispensaries were opened, schools were organized, and the Chinese Bible, and other Christian literature was introduced, scattered, and taught. Through these means the people were gradually brought within the reach of the missionaries—some prompted by selfish motives and others honestly seeking after the truth.

The first fruit was gathered in by Rev. J. H. Ballagh, who baptized his language teacher named Yano Riu at Yokohama in October, 1864. Two years later Dr. Verbeck baptized two men of high standing in the south of Japan. The circumstances of their conversion were so remarkable that it is worth while to mention them briefly. Before any treaty was made with foreign powers, a British fleet entered into the harbor of Nagasaki. Alarmed by the sudden appearance of the strange warship the government ordered the neighboring daimios to send their soldiers to protect the shore and at the same time to prevent the ship from com-

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[1] The Baptist Free Mission trusted their work in Japan to the American Baptist Missionary Union in May, 1872.

municating with the people. One of the commanders of the army, named Wakasa, while exploring the harbor on a small boat one day, found a small book floating on the water. He brought it back to his camp, and, after inquiries, he was told by a Dutch interpreter, that it was a Bible which teaches us about God, the creator of the universe and His son Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. This greatly awakened Wakasa's curiosity. Having learned that there was a Chinese translation of the same book in Shanghai, China, he sent for it, and finally procured a copy. After returning home from the service he induced four others to join him in the study of the curious book. Later they found a teacher in Dr. Verbeck at Nagasaki. But as they could not come there in person, owing to the feudal duties, messengers were employed "going regularly back and forth between teacher and pupils, carrying inquiries and explications as they came and went" for nearly three years. In 1866, Wakasa and his brother Ayebe[2] were at last given permission to leave their services for awhile. Immediately coming to Nagasaki, they were baptized by Dr. Verbeck on the day of Pentacost, May 20th.[3]

The year 1872 is one of the memorable dates in the history of Japanese Christianity. "In January, the missonaries at Yokohama and the English-speaking residents of all denominations united in the observance of the Week of Prayer. Some Japanese students connected with the private classes taught by the missionaries were present through curiosity or through a desire to please their teachers and some perhaps from a true interest in Christianity. It was concluded to read the Acts in course day after day, and that the Japanese present might take part intelligently in the service, the scripture of the day was translated extemporaneously into their language. The meetings grew in interest

[2] Wakasa died in 1872; but Ayabe is still living (1895) and is a faithful member of one of the churches in Tokio.

[3] For the minute account, see the "Gospel in all Lands," Sept., 1889.

and were continued from week to week until the end of February. After a week or two the Japanese for the first time in the history of the nation were on their knees in a Christian prayer meeting, entreating God with great emotion, with tears streaming down their faces, that He would give His spirit to Japan as to the early church and to the people around the apostles. These prayers were characterized by intense earnestness. Captains of men-of-war, English and American, who witnessed the scene, wrote to us, 'The prayers of these Japanese take the heart out of us.' A missionary wrote that the intensity of feeling was such that he feared often that he would faint away in the meetings. Half a dozen perhaps of the Japanese thus publicly engaged in prayer, but the number present was much larger. This is the record of the first Japanese prayer meeting."[4]

"As a direct fruit of these prayer meetings the first Japanese Christian church was organized at Yokohama on March 10, 1872. It consisted of nine young men who were baptized on that day and two middle-aged men who had been previously baptized. The members gave their church the Catholic name of 'the Church of Christ in Japan,' and drew up their own constitution, a simple evangelical creed, together with some rules of church government, according to which the government was to be in the hands of the pastor and elders with the consent of the members."[5]

In September of the following year there was organized with eight members through the effort of Rev. D. Thompson, of the Presbyterian church, the first Protestant church in Tokio, the nucleus of the present Chin Sakaye Church. The members adopted the same doctrine and church government as those of the Yokohama church.

Alongside those who were directly engaged in missionary work there were some who, though not missonaries, did a noble work for the religion. In Kumamoto a group of

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[4] Proc. of the Osaka Conference, p. 52.

[5] Proc. of the Osaka Conference, 53.

young men,[6] who were destined to form the future corner-stone of the Kumiai (Congregation) church, was, in the midst of severe persecutions, converted in 1875 under the instruction of Captain L. L. Janes, who was invited by the prince of that place to teach the pupils of his school.

In Sapporo, a similar work was done by Prof. W. S. Clark[7] among the students of the Agricultural College and one of the earliest independent churches was established by the teachers and students of the college. As the work was thus bcoming more and more extensive, the translation of the Bible into the language became imperative. To meet this demand a convention of missionaries was called at Yokohama in 1872, which resulted in the appointment of a Bible translation committee which practically commenced its work in January, 1874. A similar committee under the name of the Tokio Bible Translation Committee was also formed on October 30, 1876, at Tsukiji at a meeting of the missionaries of Tokio. The former committee undertook the translation of the New Testament, and the latter, that of the Old Testament.

"In view, however, of the number of missionaries of various denominations being much increased since 1872, the year of the convention, which created that committee (Yokohama), it seemed desirable that some new measures be taken and arrangements made for the furtherance of the work of the Old Testament translation also."[8] Accordingly, a general convention of missionaries was called in Tokio on the 10th and 13th of May, 1878, and there was appointed a

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[6] Afterwards they became the pupils of that inspired educator, Mr. Neesima, and they are now champions of the Christian religion in Japan.

[7] Dr. Clark came to Japan in 1876 by the invitation of government to organize an agricultural college after the plan of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, of which he was then president.

[8] See Proc. of the Osaka Conference, 95.

new committee,[9] which represented all Protestant denominations in Japan, and to whose hand was to be entrusted the further work of translation and revision of both Old and New Testaments. By mutual consent the Yokohama and Tokio Translation Committees submitted their work to this newly-appointed committee, so that the translation might "come forth under the authorization of all Protestant missionaries in this country," though practically the same persons continued in the work of translation, only under a different name.

The New Testament[10] was finally completed in 1880 after the labor of about five years and six months, but the Old Testament was not finished till 1887.

The members of the committee, who took the most active part in translation, were Doctors J. C. Hepburn, S. R. Brown, D. C. Green, and R. S. Maclay among the missionaries, and Messrs. Maysuyama, Okuno, and Takahashi among the native Christians.[11] Their task was an exceedingly difficult one. "In this country," said Dr. Hepburn, senior member of the New Testament Translation Committee, "where from the earliest times the Chinese language and literature have had such a powerful influence upon the cultivation and language of the people, it was, at the very first, a matter of considerable anxiety in what literary style our work should be brought out, to make it most acceptable and useful. The conclusion it was desirable to arrive at, was not difficult to be determined; avoiding, on the one hand, the

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[9] This committee was called a Permanent Committee and was given power to "select a committee or committees for the translation, to whom they shall assign the various parts of the work, and shall also appoint a General Revising Committee."

[10] The Yokohama Committee had nearly completed the translation of the New Testament before it submitted its work to the new committee. Only from Ephesians to the end of the book was left unfinished.

[11] The literary merits of the translation largely belong to the Japanese members.

quasi-Chinese style, intelligible only to the highly cultivated, and, on the other hand, a vulgar colloquial, which, though easily understood, might make the Scriptures contemptible, we should choose that style, which, while respected even by the so-called literati, was easy and intelligible to all classes. We thus adhered to the vernacular or pure Japanese, a style which may be called classical and in which many of the best books intended for the common reader are written."[12] "That they performed this task successfully is clear from the fact that fifteen years of progress in Christian knowledge and experience have created no demand for its revision. * * * Indeed, the Japanese Bible is already exerting something of the same influence over the Japanese language which Luther's version has had over the German tongue."[13]

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[12] Part of Dr. Hepburn's address given at the celebration of the completion of the translation of the New Testament at the Shin Sakaye Church, Tokio, April 19, 1880.

[13] Gordon's An American Missionary in Japan, 197.

CHAPTER V.

RISE OF THE NATIONALISTIC CHURCH.

Although Christianity progressed considerably during these periods and the number of communicants reached to two thousand nine hundred and sixty-five at the end of 1879,[1] yet it was not till the native workers became the active coöperators of missionaries that efficient work was done in the interior of the country, and it was not till the Japanese Christians became the leaders of propagandism that the Christian influence was felt among the people generally. This is one of the singular features of the Japanese Christianity which we do not find elsewhere. The truth is that in other missionary fields the intellectual equipments of converts are mostly such that they naturally look up to missionaries as their superiors in all kinds of Christian work; but, in Japan, a great majority of the converts are intelligent and ambitious students who first came to the missionaries, or Christian teachers, with an earnest desire of acquiring western knowledge. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that they soon came to overshadow the missionaries in all departments of work,—evangelical, literary, and educational. These students were mostly men belonging to a class called Samurai. Now, the men of this class possess peculiar characteristics. For many centuries "they have been trained to be faithful to their feudal masters even unto death. The spirit of patriotism has been handed down among them from generation to generation. To them honor is everything; life and prosperity are of no account. They are indeed the oriental knights, the spirit of Japan, the flower of the na-

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[1] Proc. of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Alliance of Japan, 7.

tion. It was they who crushed the Shogun's despotic government and restored the reigning power to the sacred personage of long secluded Mikado. It was they who cast off the old wornout Asiatic system and adopted the vigorous form of European civilization. It was they who started schools, pushed the press, cried out for personal rights, etc. They are far better educated than any other class. They are no longer ignorant worshippers of dumb idols. Being strictly trained to faithfulness to their feudal masters they will be more faithful to the Master of masters if He is made clearly known to them. Being middle in rank they can reach both the higher and the lower. This may be the very class where we may expect to find a Saul of Tarsus."[2] Such importance being attached to this class it is plain that the success of Christanity in Japan depended largely on the winning or losing of it. But very few missionaries understood this. Even if they had they would not have been able to win over the men of this class, for "with all respect for the high motives which may prompt most missionaries to enter the field, it cannot be denied that too many of them are far from exemplary in their methods of work or in their intellectual equipment. Too often, inexperienced, sanguine young men go forth exuberant with the hope that with their meagre store of knowledge and experience they may be able to convince pagan philosophy of its errors. The result is that they find their scanty college education inadequate to satisfy the intellectual demands made upon them by the better educated of the natives and their small spiritual experience insufficient to guide the more consecrated."[3]

It is mainly due to the genius of J. Hardy Neesima,[4] the first native missionary, the educator, the patriot, and the reformer that the Samurai class was won over through the

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[2] Hardy's Life and Letters of J. H. Nessima, 170-171.

[3] Nitobe's United States and Japan, 130.

[4] For the life of this remarkable man, see Hardy's Life and Letters of J. H. Neesima.

instrumentality of his school,[5] the first systematically organized Christian college worthy of the name, and later, by his talented pupils, whose advent marked the dawn of a new epoch in Japanese missionary history, the beginning of the model church of future Japan.

It was providential that Christianity in Japan made its beginning so fortunately. Had it been started from the lower classes of people, who are ignorant, superstitious, and consequently, dependent upon missionaries in all matters, the result would have been the establishment of American and European Christianity with all its evils and weaknesses. Or had it been introduced by the head of the state, or by the higher classes, through mere political motives, the future Japanese church would have been a mere gathering place of formalists and hypocrites without spirituality and regenerating power. But it has begun from that remarkable middle, or Samurai class, which was alone able to establish a strong, ideal church of Christ. Moreover, this new church received for the first time, in the spring of 1883, a new experience, even the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the most extraordinary way, and the young energetic Christians, already well equipped intellectually, were thus still better prepared for the future great responsibility.

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[5] This school was boldly established in November, 1875, in Kioto, which had been for a thousand years the capital of the Mikado and the center of Buddhism and Shintoism, having over 6,000 temples and 10,000 priests. The school was very successful. It has now developed into a university, having over five hundred students. (1895.)

VITA.

Masanobu Ishizaka was born in Tokio, Japan, in 1861. He received his early education in both Japanese and Chinese, together with the common branches of education under private teachers. Later, English was also added. In 1878, he entered into the Yobimon (now the Higher Middle School of the Imperial University), but, in 1880, he moved to the Tokio Anglo-Japanese College, which was then in Yokohama, and stayed with this school till 1889, at first as a pupil, afterwards as a teacher and business manager of the college. In 1889, he came to Albion College, Michigan, U. S. A., and received the degree of Ph. B. in 1891. Then he came to Baltimore and pursued graduate courses in history and politics for three years. His principal subject was history and his subordinate studies were political economy and jurisprudence.